

LINGUISTIC IMPOLITENESS IN MEMES DURING THE 2024 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

¹Miftahulhairah Anwar, ²Fachrur Razi Amir, ¹Siti Aminataz Zuhriyah, ³Rahayu Purbasari, ⁴Helvy Tiana Rosa

¹Indonesian Language Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

²Arabic Language Education, Universitas Djuanda Bogor, Indonesia

³English Literature, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

⁴Indonesian Literature, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author Email: miftahulhairah@unj.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: August 2024 Revised: September 2024 Published: October 2024	<i>This study investigates the phenomenon of linguistic impoliteness in memes related to the 2024 presidential election, a topic that has received limited scholarly attention despite the growing prominence of memes as a medium for political expression. The research aims to address this gap by examining how impolite language in memes influences political discourse and potentially exacerbates societal tensions. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected from a variety of meme images sourced from the internet. The analysis identified several forms of linguistic impoliteness, including bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm, and the withholding of politeness. These findings indicate that impolite language in memes not only reflects an aggressive tone in political discourse but may also contribute to deepening divisions among political factions by reinforcing negative stereotypes and hostility. The implications of the study extend beyond advocating for more responsible meme usage, suggesting that the unchecked spread of impoliteness in digital content could undermine democratic processes by intensifying political polarization and eroding the quality of public debate. The reliance on a specific set of social media platforms and a limited timeframe presents constraints on the generalizability of the findings, as the data may not capture the full spectrum of linguistic behavior across different digital spaces. Future research should consider broader datasets and longitudinal analysis to explore how impoliteness in online political communication evolves over time and identify strategies to mitigate its divisive impact.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The study of linguistic politeness has been a pivotal area of research within sociolinguistics and pragmatics, with its significance only increasing in the context of modern digital communication. The role of language in shaping societal behaviors and influencing mass mobilization during electoral campaigns has long been recognized (Nimmo, 2001; Shevchenko et al., 2021; Sorour, 2023). Traditionally, the ideal in campaign communication has been to utilize persuasive language that is informative, honest, and adheres to the principles of linguistic politeness, thereby avoiding the spread of hatred and maintaining the integrity of political discourse. However, the reality of electoral communication, especially as observed in the lead-up to the 2024 presidential election, starkly contrasts this ideal. The rise of hate speech, polarization, and the spread of misinformation have been highlighted as significant challenges,

with linguistic impoliteness becoming increasingly prevalent (Lukihardianti, 2023; LEMHANAS, 2022; Juanda & Iskandar, 2024).

Recent studies in the field of linguistic politeness have shifted focus from traditional face-to-face communication to include digital and online platforms, where the norms of politeness are often challenged or disregarded entirely (Syting & Gildore, 2022; Taiwo & Kpolugho, 2021). The increasing use of social media platforms and digital communication tools has led to the proliferation of new forms of language use, where traditional politeness strategies are often replaced by more direct, impolite forms of expression. This shift has necessitated a reevaluation of existing politeness theories and the development of new frameworks to understand and analyze linguistic behavior in these contexts.

A key development in this area is the work of Culpeper (2011), who proposed a contemporary framework for understanding linguistic politeness and impoliteness. Unlike earlier models, such as those proposed by Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987), which primarily focused on politeness as a means of maintaining social harmony and mitigating face-threatening acts, Culpeper's model emphasizes the role of impoliteness in communication. He identifies five strategies of linguistic impoliteness: bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness. These strategies have been widely applied in recent studies to analyze various forms of communication, including emotional abuse (Alvarez, 2022; Tandiono, 2023), markers of identity in cross-cultural contexts (Su, 2022; Waluyo et al., 2019), and linguistic expressions of politeness (Jeong, 2021; Yadav, 2022).

Although significant progress has been made in the study of linguistic politeness, a notable gap remains in the literature concerning the analysis of this phenomenon within the context of memes, especially those connected to political campaigns. In the digital age, memes have emerged as a ubiquitous form of communication, functioning as influential tools for disseminating information and shaping social attitudes. Their role in presidential campaigns is well-established, with the 2016 U.S. presidential election serving as a prominent example; during this campaign, memes were instrumental in shaping public perceptions and swaying political opinions, as documented in studies by Praditya (2021) and Zhong (2018). These studies underscore the capacity of memes to not only reflect but also actively influence the political landscape, contributing to the formation of voter attitudes and the outcome of elections.

However, while there is considerable research on the persuasive power of memes and their use in political messaging, there has been limited investigation into how linguistic impoliteness specifically manifests in this medium. The potential for impolite language in memes to affect political discourse and exacerbate social polarization remains underexplored. Understanding the nature and impact of linguistic impoliteness in memes is crucial, as such content often bypasses traditional editorial oversight, allowing for the widespread circulation of unfiltered and aggressive language. This gap in the literature highlights the need for focused research on the dynamics of impoliteness in memes, its implications for political communication, and the broader consequences for democratic engagement and societal cohesion.

This research aims to address this gap by focusing on the phenomenon of linguistic impoliteness in memes surrounding the 2024 presidential election. Unlike previous studies that have primarily examined language politeness from a pragmatic perspective, this study adopts Culpeper's contemporary framework to analyze how impoliteness strategies are employed in memes to convey political messages. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on memes as a form of campaign communication, an area that has been largely overlooked in the existing literature on language politeness. The use of memes in political campaigns is particularly relevant in the current digital era, where social media has become a primary platform for political engagement. Memes, with their combination of visual and textual elements, offer a

unique medium for the rapid and widespread dissemination of political messages. However, the informal and often anonymous nature of meme creation and sharing has also led to the frequent use of impolite language, which can contribute to the spread of hate speech and the exacerbation of social divisions. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights into the role of linguistic impoliteness in memes and its implications for political communication and social cohesion.

The burning issue addressed by this study is the potential for linguistic impoliteness in memes to trigger conflicts and deepen societal polarization during electoral campaigns. As the 2024 presidential election approaches, the prevalence of hate speech and the use of divisive language in memes pose significant challenges to the integrity of the electoral process. This study seeks to highlight the importance of understanding and addressing these challenges to promote healthier political dialogue and reduce the risk of conflict. By examining the specific strategies of impoliteness used in election-related memes, this research aims to contribute to the broader field of language politeness analysis and provide practical recommendations for mitigating the negative impact of impolite language in digital communication.

The study of linguistic politeness, particularly in the context of digital communication and memes, is a rapidly evolving field that reflects the changing nature of social interaction in the digital age. While significant progress has been made in understanding the role of politeness and impoliteness in various forms of communication, there remains a critical need for up-to-date research that addresses the specific challenges posed by new media. This research fills an important gap in the literature by focusing on the use of linguistic impoliteness in memes during the 2024 presidential election, offering new insights into the impact of digital communication on political discourse and societal behavior. The findings of this study are expected to have significant implications for both the academic field of language politeness analysis and the practical realm of political communication, highlighting the need for more responsible and informed use of language in electoral campaigns.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive research design to thoroughly explore and articulate the phenomenon of linguistic impoliteness in memes related to the 2024 presidential election. The qualitative approach is particularly well-suited to this investigation as it facilitates a deep examination of the language used in these memes, allowing for a nuanced analysis of the impoliteness strategies employed. The focus of the study is on providing a comprehensive description of the various forms of linguistic impoliteness found in memes associated with the three primary presidential candidate pairs: Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar (01), Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming (02), and Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD (03). This approach enables the research to capture the intricate ways in which impoliteness is expressed and understood within the context of digital political discourse.

Rather than aiming to establish causal relationships, this research is focused on describing and categorizing the linguistic features observed in the collected data. By doing so, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how impoliteness is manifested in the political memes circulating during the election period. The descriptive nature of the research allows for a detailed account of the language used in these memes, highlighting the specific strategies of impoliteness employed and their potential impact on political communication. This contributes valuable insights to the field of digital political discourse, particularly in understanding the role of language in shaping public perceptions and the dynamics of political dialogue in the digital age.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection process for this study was meticulously designed using two primary techniques: documentation and note-taking. The primary data consisted of memes that were widely circulated on the internet during the peak of the 2024 presidential campaign, specifically in January and February 2024. The research focused on memes related to the three main presidential candidate pairs, which were actively shared across various social media platforms and online communities. The documentation process involved a systematic approach to capturing and archiving relevant memes from the internet. This was achieved by searching for and downloading images that prominently featured the three presidential candidate pairs within the specified timeframe. The search utilized a combination of keywords related to the candidates and election themes to ensure a thorough and comprehensive collection of relevant memes. These memes were then stored in a digital database, ensuring a diverse and representative dataset for subsequent analysis.

In addition to documentation, note-taking played a crucial role in capturing critical information embedded within the memes. This involved recording not only the textual content but also the context in which the memes were shared, including the platform, the nature of accompanying comments, and the general sentiment expressed by users interacting with the memes. The note-taking process was essential for capturing the implicit messages, tones, and rhetorical devices employed in the memes, which are vital for understanding the subtleties of linguistic impoliteness. Furthermore, notes were also taken on the visual elements of the memes, such as imagery and layout, as these aspects often contribute significantly to the overall impact and potential aggressiveness of the content. By combining these two techniques, the study was able to gather a rich, multifaceted dataset that provides a comprehensive basis for analyzing the phenomenon of linguistic impoliteness in political memes.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis of the collected data employed a qualitative data analysis technique, which unfolded through three interconnected stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The initial stage, data reduction, was a crucial process of selecting and filtering the vast corpus of memes gathered. This involved a meticulous review of each meme to determine whether it contained elements of linguistic impoliteness, as defined by Culpeper's (2011) framework. Specific attention was given to identifying instances of bald on-record impoliteness, positive or negative impoliteness, sarcasm, or the withholding of politeness. Through this rigorous selection process, 72 memes were identified as having significant instances of linguistic impoliteness and were subsequently retained for deeper analysis, while those that did not meet the criteria were excluded from further consideration.

Following data reduction, the selected memes were organized and categorized in the data presentation stage. This involved constructing an analysis table that systematically recorded and classified the memes according to the specific impoliteness strategies they exhibited. The table included detailed information such as the candidate pair featured in each meme, the type of impoliteness strategy used, the specific language or imagery employed, and any relevant contextual information that could influence interpretation. Presenting the data in this structured format allowed for a clear comparison across the various memes, enabling the identification of patterns and trends in how linguistic impoliteness is utilized in the political discourse of memes. The final stage, conclusion drawing, involved interpreting these patterns in relation to the research objectives. The conclusions drawn from this analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the forms and implications of linguistic impoliteness in the context of the 2024 presidential election. These insights contribute to broader discussions on the role of memes in shaping public perceptions and political attitudes, highlighting the critical need for responsible communication in political campaigning.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Based on the analyzed data, forms of linguistic impoliteness were found in memes related to the 2024 presidential election. These forms can be seen in Figure 1.

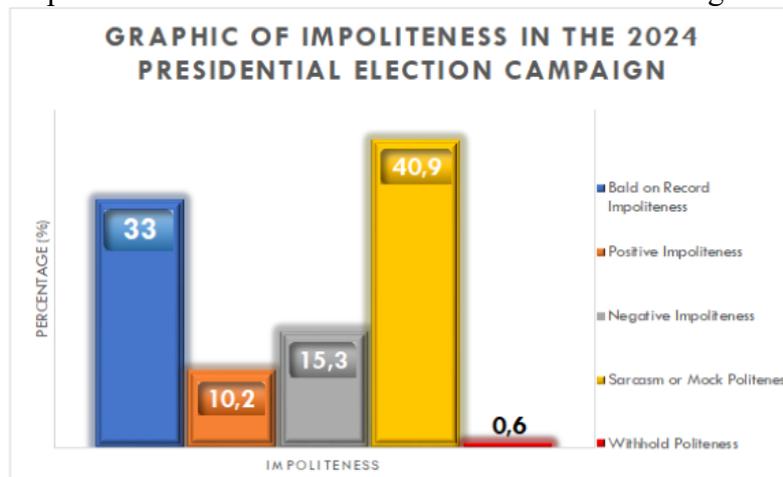


Figure 1. Linguistic Impoliteness in Memes about the Presidential Election

The data analysis reveals that different forms of linguistic impoliteness were employed in varying degrees in the memes related to the 2024-2029 presidential election. The most prevalent form identified was sarcasm or mock politeness, which accounted for 40.9% of the instances. This form of impoliteness typically involves the use of ironic or insincere expressions that appear polite on the surface but are intended to convey a critical or mocking tone. Such usage suggests that many memes aimed to undermine or ridicule political figures or ideas while maintaining a veneer of politeness, making the criticism more biting and indirect. Bald on record impoliteness was the second most common, representing 33% of the instances. This type of impoliteness is characterized by direct and unmitigated statements that openly disregard the feelings or social expectations of the audience. Memes using this strategy were likely blunt and straightforward in their attacks, employing clear insults or offensive language without attempting to soften the impact. Negative impoliteness, which constituted 15.3% of the data, involved more explicit confrontations, such as harsh criticisms or derogatory remarks aimed at belittling others. Positive impoliteness, at 10.2%, was less frequent but involved tactics where speakers asserted dominance through seemingly positive or friendly language that actually served to patronize or subtly insult others. The least common form was withhold politeness, making up only 0.6% of the instances. This rare form involved situations where polite language or expected social niceties were deliberately omitted, signaling a refusal to engage in customary politeness. The distribution of these impoliteness strategies highlights the varied approaches used in the political discourse of the memes, with a significant reliance on sarcasm and direct insults to convey criticism during the election period.

Bald on Record Impoliteness

The strategy of bald on-record impoliteness characterizes a communicative approach that is firm and straightforward in threatening the face of the interlocutor. In this case, the message delivered is not only unambiguous but also issued briefly and directly to the target without any ambiguity. The uniqueness of this strategy lies in the understanding that the presence of face or face-related aspects in such situations is considered irrelevant or even minimized, hence not needing to be deeply connected with facial expressions. The direct use of impoliteness strategies can create a strong impact but is often seen as rude and can harm interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the wise selection of when and how this strategy is used is crucial to minimize

conflict risks and maintain the quality of communicative interaction. Data containing speech acts involving Bald on Record Impoliteness were found to be 33%.

Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness reflects a communication strategy deliberately designed to damage the positive face of the listener or reader. This strategy involves several actions that can lead to discomfort or dissatisfaction in the message recipient. Characteristics of positive impoliteness include being unsympathetic, ignoring or treating the target speaker as nonexistent, using terms or identifiers inappropriately and intentionally, using secret or incomprehensible language to the target of the speech, using taboo language, and using insulting nicknames. The use of this strategy is designed to undermine the recipient's desire for a positive face. Data containing speech acts involving positive impoliteness were found to be 10.2%.

Negative Impoliteness

Negative impoliteness is the use of strategies aimed at damaging the negative face of the listener or interlocutor. Examples of negative impoliteness include threatening (instilling the belief that their actions will harm), belittling, mocking or ridiculing, insulting, not treating the interlocutor seriously, demeaning the interlocutor (considering them insignificant), attacking others (interrupting opportunities), using negative pronouns, placing others in debt, and more. Data containing speech acts involving negative impoliteness were found to be 15.3%.

Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

The strategy of sarcasm is an approach to communication that involves the use of politeness that is pretended or superficial. In this strategy, a person tends to deliver a message with a tone or words that seem polite but hold contradictory meanings. Sarcasm is often used to convey subtle irony or criticism. This form can cause confusion or even discomfort to the message recipient. Data containing speech acts involving Sarcasm or Mock Politeness were found to be 40.9%.

Withhold Politeness

Strategy of withholding politeness is not to perform politeness strategies as expected. This strategy occurs due to negligence or intentional disregard of the politeness that should be observed. An example of this strategy is when someone does not say thank you when helped, or when borrowing something from someone without asking for permission first. This includes not responding to greetings, and so on. Data containing utterances with Withhold Politeness was found to be 0.6%. Furthermore, here are some examples of images found for each form of language impoliteness in memes about the presidential election for the 2024-2029 period, as in Table 1.

Table 1
Examples of Images of Language Impoliteness in Memes about the Presidential Election Period 2024-2029

Images	Images
	
<p>Image 1. Bald on Record Impoliteness</p>	<p>Image 2. Bald on Record Impoliteness</p>

Images	Images
(Social Media Accounts X @Ca'Gatot)	(Source: Social media accounts Instagram @komikkitaig)



Image 3. Positive Impoliteness
(Source: Social media accounts Instagram @poliklitik)



Image 4. Negative Impoliteness
Source: Social media account X @Stsghourr



Image 5. Negative Impoliteness
(Source: Social media accounts Instagram @komikkitaig)



Image 6. Sarcasm or Mock Politeness
(Source: Social media accounts Instagram @poliklitik.com)



Image 7. Sarcasm or Mock Politeness
(Source: Social Media Account Instagram @komikkitaig)



Image 8. Sarcasm or Mock Politeness
(Source: Social Media account Instagram @komikkitaig)

Based on the analysis of Table 1, the data reveals several examples of images spread on social media that demonstrate the presence of linguistic impoliteness in relation to the 2024-2029 presidential election. These memes employ various strategies of impoliteness aimed at the

presidential candidates, which serve to undermine their public personas and credibility. For instance, in Image 1, the meme exhibits language impoliteness through the text accompanying the cartoon characters, where the phrase "We were deceived by his father, why do you still want to be deceived by his son" directly accuses President Jokowi Widodo and his son, Gibran Rakabuming, of deceit. This choice of words carries a strong negative connotation, suggesting a deliberate attempt to portray both figures in a deceptive light, thus contributing to an atmosphere of distrust and negativity. While the meme could be interpreted as a critique of the current administration, the language used is unmistakably impolite as it directly attacks the integrity of the individuals involved.

Similarly, Image 2 contains language impoliteness through the phrases "Time for Indonesia to be ashamed" and "illegal vice president," which are aimed at Gibran Rakabuming. The use of the word "shame" alongside Indonesia creates a negative association with the country, while the label "illegal" attached to Gibran implies that his candidacy is illegitimate, further criticizing the Constitutional Court's decision on the age limit for vice presidential candidates. This open criticism, while reflective of political dissatisfaction, employs impolite language that directly challenges the legitimacy of a presidential candidate. Furthermore, Image 3 demonstrates positive impoliteness in the dialogue between cartoon characters, where one character's assertion that "Presidential Candidate 01 won all debates" dismisses the contributions of Candidates 02 and 03, while the other character's statement, "Winning the debate does not necessarily win the hearts of the people," belittles Candidate 01's achievements. This dialogue subtly undermines the candidates, contributing to the overall impoliteness of the meme.

In Image 4, the presence of negative impoliteness is distinctly apparent through the use of derogatory language and taboo expressions directed at the presidential candidates. The choice of words, such as "dick" and "bokep" when referring to Ganjar Pranowo, reflects a deliberate attempt to demean and degrade the candidate, utilizing vulgar terms that go beyond mere criticism to inflict reputational harm. Similarly, the derogatory nicknames used for Anies Baswedan and Prabowo Subianto aim to belittle these figures, reducing their public personas to offensive caricatures rather than engaging in substantive political critique. This use of language is not just inappropriate within the context of political discourse, but is also a calculated strategy to undermine the candidates' credibility and dignity in the eyes of the public.

In a comparable manner, Image 5 continues to employ negative impoliteness, evident in the use of the term "halu" to describe Anies Baswedan, a slang expression implying hallucination or detachment from reality. This choice of wording suggests that the candidate is out of touch or lacks a realistic perspective, thereby discrediting his political stance. Additionally, associating Prabowo Subianto with accusations of money politics introduces a layer of moral judgment, insinuating unethical behavior and further tarnishing his reputation. Both images employ negative impoliteness not only as a means of criticism but as a rhetorical tactic to diminish the candidates' public image, utilizing language intended to provoke strong emotional responses and contribute to a hostile and polarized political atmosphere. Such strategic impoliteness in these memes serves to intensify the divisive tone of the electoral discourse, ultimately impacting how the candidates are perceived by the electorate.

Image 6 illustrates a more nuanced form of impoliteness, where participants at a campaign event respond with two fingers and the word "Bowo," signaling support for Prabowo Subianto while attending a rally for Ganjar Pranowo. Although this interaction may appear polite on the surface, it actually conveys a contradictory and potentially discomfiting message, revealing underlying criticism. Additionally, Image 7 uses sarcasm as a form of false politeness, with the statement "Believe me, our voices are only counted, but not listened to" subtly criticizing the political process in a way that might be seen as polite but is inherently impolite due to its conflicting meaning. Finally, in Image 8, the audience's silent and confused reaction to a

presidential candidate's statement is an implicit form of impoliteness, signaling their disregard and lack of appreciation for the proposed work program, further contributing to the impolite tone of the meme. In this context, these examples illustrate how linguistic impoliteness is strategically utilized in political memes to convey criticism, undermine credibility, and influence public perception during the 2024-2029 presidential election. The various forms of impoliteness, whether direct or subtle, reflect the contentious nature of political discourse in the digital age and highlight the power of social media in shaping political narratives.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the use of linguistic impoliteness in memes related to the 2024-2029 presidential election, highlighting the prevalence of sarcasm or mock politeness as the dominant form of impoliteness, constituting 40.9% of the cases. This suggests that sarcasm, which involves pretending to be polite while subtly belittling or insulting the target, is a preferred strategy in political discourse, especially in a tense election environment. The widespread use of sarcasm can be attributed to its ability to express dissatisfaction or disapproval indirectly, allowing users to criticize political figures or policies without overt confrontation. This indirect approach might be seen as a way to avoid direct conflict or to mask the severity of the criticism, making it socially acceptable in contexts where overt hostility might be frowned upon. It is in line with the findings of Alemi & Latifi (2019) provide a foundational understanding of how linguistic impoliteness manifests in political discourse, particularly through the lens of sarcasm and mock politeness, which aligns with the significant insights revealed in the current study regarding the 2024-2029 presidential election memes. Their analysis of impoliteness strategies employed by Democrats and Republicans during the 2013 government shutdown illustrates a similar prevalence of sarcasm as a tactic for political confrontation, thereby reinforcing the notion that such strategies are not only common but also strategically utilized to undermine opponents in a polarized environment.

Sarcasm's prominence in these memes also reflects the polarized nature of the political environment, where supporters of different candidates use it as a tool to mock opponents and assert their superiority. However, while sarcasm can serve as a vehicle for political critique, its overuse can exacerbate tensions and deepen divisions within society. The nuanced and often ambiguous nature of sarcasm means it can easily be misunderstood, leading to further conflict rather than fostering meaningful dialogue (Abdelkawy, 2019; Acheampong & Kwarteng, 2021). This finding challenges the traditional understanding of sarcasm as a relatively harmless form of humor, instead positioning it as a potent instrument of political division when used in the context of highly charged electoral campaigns.

The significant presence of bald on record impoliteness, which accounts for 33% of the data, further underscores the confrontational tone of the political discourse in these memes. Unlike sarcasm, bald on record impoliteness is characterized by direct, unfiltered language that often involves insults or offensive remarks made without any attempt to soften the impact. This form of impoliteness is particularly damaging in the political sphere as it not only reflects but also fuels the aggressive rhetoric that can polarize public opinion and escalate conflicts among supporters of different candidates (Ajayi & Bamgbose, 2019; Arrasyd & Hamzah, 2019). The use of vulgar or taboo language in these memes indicates a disregard for the norms of civil discourse, potentially undermining democratic processes by creating an environment where hostile and inflammatory speech is normalized.

The rarity of withhold politeness, observed in only 0.6% of the cases, is another noteworthy finding. Withhold politeness involves the deliberate omission of expected polite behaviors, such as expressing gratitude or acknowledging others' feelings. The scarcity of this form in the analyzed memes suggests that while the political discourse is rife with overt and covert forms of impoliteness, there is less reliance on passive-aggressive strategies that involve withholding expected social niceties. It is in line with Bacic (2023) who argue that the creators

of these memes prefer more direct or overt forms of impoliteness, possibly because they are seen as more effective in conveying strong political messages or in rallying supporters.

The absence of memes that show mutual respect or support among the presidential candidates, and the prevalence of those depicting conflict and mockery, points to a broader issue of polarization in the political landscape. The fact that the candidates are often labeled with derogatory nicknames or depicted in a negative light reinforces the divisive nature of the election campaign. This trend aligns with the observations of Anwar et al. (2023), who noted that anonymity, physical distance, group influence, and other factors contribute to the rise of impoliteness on social media platforms. These factors allow users to express themselves freely, often without the constraints of social norms that typically govern face-to-face interactions (Banguis, 2023; Erlinda, 2022; Gracia, 2016). The result is a communication environment where incivility and impoliteness can flourish, further dividing society along political lines.

The implications of these findings are significant for both the study of linguistic impoliteness and the broader field of political communication. The high prevalence of sarcasm and bald on record impoliteness in these memes challenges existing theories that may have underestimated the impact of such strategies in digital political discourse. Traditional theories of politeness, such as those proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), focused on the role of politeness in maintaining social harmony and avoiding face-threatening acts. However, the data from this study suggest that in the context of social media and political memes, impoliteness strategies are not only common but are also used deliberately to disrupt social harmony and provoke reactions.

This finding highlights the need for a reevaluation of existing politeness theories to account for the unique dynamics of online communication, where the usual constraints of politeness may be less relevant or entirely disregarded. The anonymity and physical distance afforded by social media platforms, as discussed by Kramer (2016) and Spears (2021), contribute to an environment where users feel emboldened to engage in impolite behavior without fear of immediate social repercussions. This shift in communication norms necessitates a more nuanced understanding of how politeness and impoliteness function in digital spaces, particularly in the context of politically charged content.

Moreover, the findings of this study have important implications for the health of democratic processes. The normalization of impoliteness in political discourse, as evidenced by the widespread use of sarcasm and direct insults in these memes, can erode the foundations of civil debate and mutual respect that are essential for a functioning democracy. When political discourse is dominated by impoliteness, it becomes more difficult for individuals to engage in constructive dialogue, leading to increased polarization and a breakdown in social cohesion (Li & Wu, 2023; Mukhallad, 2022; Novalia & Ambalegin, 2021). This is particularly concerning in the context of elections, where the ability to have open and respectful discussions about candidates and policies is crucial for informed decision-making.

The study also fills a gap in the current knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the specific forms of impoliteness that are most prevalent in political memes. Previous research has largely focused on politeness strategies in face-to-face interactions or in more traditional forms of media, leaving a gap in our understanding of how impoliteness is deployed in digital political communication. By identifying sarcasm and bald on record impoliteness as the dominant strategies used in these memes, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the rhetorical tools used in online political discourse. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of context in interpreting the impact of impoliteness in political communication. The use of sarcasm, for example, can vary widely in its effects depending on the cultural and political context in which it is employed. In a highly polarized political environment, sarcasm may serve to reinforce existing divisions and escalate tensions, whereas in a less charged context, it might be perceived as a harmless form of humor. It is

supported by Saragih and Murni (2021) who argue that understanding the specific contexts in which different forms of impoliteness are used is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate their negative impact on political discourse.

The findings of this study highlight the prevalence and significance of linguistic impoliteness in political memes related to the 2024-2029 presidential election. The dominance of sarcasm and bald on record impoliteness in these memes reflects a broader trend of polarization and incivility in political communication on social media platforms. These findings challenge existing theories of politeness and call for a reevaluation of how impoliteness functions in digital political discourse. The study also underscores the potential dangers of normalizing impoliteness in political communication, as it can undermine democratic processes and contribute to social division. As such, it is crucial for researchers, policymakers, and social media platforms to consider the implications of these findings and to explore ways to promote healthier and more respectful political discourse in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that linguistic impoliteness plays in shaping political discourse, particularly in the context of the 2024-2029 presidential election. The dominance of sarcasm or mock politeness, which constitutes 40.9% of the impoliteness observed in the memes, suggests that this form of communication has become a prevalent tool for expressing political dissent and dissatisfaction. Sarcasm, with its ability to convey criticism in a veiled or indirect manner, allows users to mock or belittle political figures and policies without engaging in overt confrontation. This subtlety can be effective in environments where direct hostility might be less socially acceptable, but it also carries the risk of being misunderstood, potentially leading to further divisions and conflict. The significant presence of bald on record impoliteness, accounting for 33% of the instances, further highlights the confrontational tone of the political discourse, where direct and unfiltered language is used to insult or demean opponents. This trend towards aggressive and hostile communication reflects a broader shift in political rhetoric, particularly in digital spaces, where the usual constraints of face-to-face interactions are absent.

The study also brings to light the rarity of withhold politeness, observed in only 0.6% of the cases, suggesting that the creators of these memes prefer more direct and overt forms of impoliteness. This finding points to a broader issue of polarization in the political landscape, where there is little room for mutual respect or supportive discourse among presidential candidates. The prevalence of conflict and mockery in the analyzed memes indicates a deeply divided political environment, where linguistic impoliteness is not only common but also strategically employed to undermine opponents and assert superiority. These insights challenge traditional theories of politeness, which have primarily focused on the role of politeness in maintaining social harmony, by highlighting the ways in which impoliteness can be used to disrupt this harmony in digital political communication. The findings of this study are significant for understanding the dynamics of online political discourse and underscore the need for a reevaluation of existing theories of politeness to account for the unique challenges posed by digital communication platforms. Furthermore, the normalization of impoliteness in political communication has serious implications for democratic processes, as it can erode the foundations of civil debate and mutual respect that are essential for a healthy democracy.

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